



SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTHS: A STUDY OF IMPACTS

Dr. Madhukar R. Wankhede

Associate Professor, Department of English, VWS College, Dhule, MS

ABSTRACT

Third decade of the 21st century has been undergoing tremendous upheavals in communications and technology. It has brought Artificial intelligence (AI) and AI is also transforming fields of communication. In communication, media has been playing a significant role to disseminate information which is also assisted by AI nowadays. Media is of two types, i.e. mainstream media and social media. Mainstream media is in print and electronic form which focuses on the stereotyped happenings in the interests of majority at the most of time. In contrary to this, social media is growing and has become one of the most powerful tools of communication. Its uses are widespread among all groups of all ages. It has positive and negative impacts on every person and consequently on society. Therefore this paper attempts to explore social media and its positive and negative impacts on society especially on youths.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Impacts, Youths

INTRODUCTION

Social media has occupied the life space of everybody and it has become an addiction. Everyone, with some exceptions, cannot be without social media. Some are using it for entertainment, information or communication. There are millions of account holders of it and millions of users are active everyday on it. Its uses have been increasing day by day. Therefore, it is necessary to understand social media, its positive and negative impacts on youths.

Social Media:

Social media is a platform on which information or ideas or opinions or thoughts or feelings are shared and content is created with the use of internet through websites and applications. According to Britannica dictionary, it is "a form of mass media communications on the Internet (such as on websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)". It defines that social media is a form of mass media which is used for information in the form of texts, images and videos. It is a prominent platform nowadays in both positive and negative purposes used by the users and their motives are clearly deciphered through minute study. Various organizations, political parties, schools and colleges, social groups and communities are using it increasingly to get succeed in their motives of spreading any kind information. It is excessively used by youths and it has been impacting on their minds, physical and mental behaviour, surroundings and personality.

Types of Social Media Platforms:

There are various types of social media platforms in the world and it has occupied the most of time of every age group users. The types can be described as follows;

- **Facebook:** It was launched in 2006 in the world and in 2010 in India and till October 2024 it has 3.07 billion monthly active users. (Datareportal.com)
- **YouTube:** It was launched in 2005 in the world and in 2006 in India. There are 476 million users in India till October 2024. (Datareportal.com)
- **WhatsApp:** It is messaging app launched in 2009 and it has 2 billion monthly active users in October 2024. (Datareportal.com)
- **Instagram:** It is video sharing platform which was launched in 2010. It is popular among youths nowadays. It has 2 billion monthly users in October 2024. (Datareportal.com)
- **Telegram:** It was launched in 2013 and has 950 million active users in October 2024. (Datareportal.com)
- **X (Twitter):** X is a social media platform (erstwhile twitter) which was launched in 2006. It has 25 million users in India. (Statista.com)
- **Pinterest:** It was launched in 2010 in India and has 67 million active users as of October 2024. (<https://www.aandb.xyz/blog/pinterest-and-its-growth-in-india/>)
- **Share Chat:** It was launched in 2015 in India and has 350 million users.
- **LinkedIn:** It was launched in 2003 in the world and in 2009 in India. It has approximately 130 million users in India.

There are millions of users of above social media platforms in India and users of all ages are engaged in their uses daily.

Impacts of Social Media on Youths:

Everything has the benefits if it is used with certain limitations. But anything with excessive uses can be harmful or dangerous. It is in case of social media also that it has both positive and

negative impacts through its uses.

A. Positive Uses or Impacts:

1. *Friendship or To be in Connection and Contact:*

The most common use of the social media is to make friendship or to be connected or in contact with friends or family members. It helps the youth to be in touch with friends or family members who are away from each other. It does not let the users recognize that they are away from each other. The memories or happenings of day to day life are shared in the form of images or videos. It also helps to find out old friends who may not be in contact for many days or years. It means that it reconnects friends. It is also a platform that helps to find out friends of the same interest or field which assist to grow through mutual understanding.

2. *Knowledge and Information:*

Social media can be used or utilized for gaining knowledge or information shared by the authentic users or awakened citizens or youths. There are many social media groups in which very knowledgeable information is shared and it is useful for others. During covid pandemic, social media became a source of information or knowledge that what should be taken care of or what should not be done. WhatsApp or Telegram groups became very useful to the youths to get knowledge of their subjects because teachers used to share it authentically. YouTube videos also play significant role that they are beneficial for information on any topics. The students clear their concepts or doubts by watching YouTube videos which are especially created subject specific.

3. *Communication:*

Social media is used for the communication purpose without any barrier of language, culture, geographical location or age group. It is useful because one can communicate with number of friends or audience at the same time. It is a platform that an idea or opinion can be communicated without any hesitation and it is also accepted or criticized with fact check or authenticity of information expressed in opinions through available resources. One can spread information to thousands of people within a second. It is available in many languages so there is no any difficulty of language to communicate through it.

4. *Entertainment and Creativity:*

Entertainment is one of the most common uses of social media because it is full of video or images. It reduces stress or depression or tension by watching videos or images. The content on social media entertains large number of audience or users. It also provide a platform to exhibit or explore the creativity of the users. Users by exhibiting their creativity make many videos and they are shared or uploaded on internet to the purpose of entertain. There many YuTubers or social media influencers who exhibit their creativity. Social media has brought many things in limelight through creativity.

5. *Seeking or Offering Help:*

Social media is used to seek or offer help to needy people. There are many groups or communities or organizations that need any kind of help but they are unable to avail it. It is a social media that it can be available by only one shared post in this regard. Youths can come forward to help needy one by reading any social media post which intends to help. There are many instances or incidents where many have come forward to help philanthropically just through social media appeals.

6. *Making Career or Financial Benefits:*

Social media has brought many opportunities to youths and has been become a source of making career. Many youths have started their career through social media. They have used YouTube for creating videos on different themes or issues and became celebrities. They started earning through their videos or social media creations. They are also creating reels or short videos which are becoming source of income.

B. Negative Impacts:

1. *Psychological Disturbance or Mental Health:*

The youths are using social media excessively and spending hours watching videos and chatting friends. Due to spending much time on it, they are experiencing psychological disturbance because they cannot spend time for their meal and study. They are undergoing stress, depression and mental health issues for social media uses. It is badly impacting on their day to day activities. If somebody has updated their status or shared any post and it remained unnoticed or no reply, it disturbs the users. Sometimes, somebody share harmful or nonsense posts, it also disturbs the users. There are many youths who make time pass on social media without doing anything in the house or even they are neglecting their studies. They cannot achieve desirable success due to it and it has been psychologically disturbing them.

2. *Victim of Misinformation or Rumour:*

Social media has been becoming a source of spreading misinformation, rumours and distorting facts. The youths easily become victims of believing in misinformation. It easily impacts on their mind. Due to believing in misinformation or rumour, physical violence or spoiling of relationships takes place. Due to misinformation, they become staunch followers of their respective religion or caste or language and they behave accordingly.

3. *Deceiving or Cyberbullying:*

There are many incidents that the youths are deceived due to excessive social media uses. They believe in online surveys or click any online fraud links and it causes them badly. Nowadays, they are becoming victims of cyberbullying. Their images or display pictures or content shared on social media is used to threat them or deceive them. They are also blackmailed by deep fake videos or images shared by them. Sometimes their social media accounts are hacked and they are blackmailed.

4. *Waste of Time and Money:*

Social media is also a platform of waste of time or money because once you are logged in we cannot understand that our hours are spent on surfing. The youths prefer to buy expensive mobile phones to use social media or impress or influence their friends. They spend hours and hours on social media without doing anything.

5. *Threat to Relationships:*

Social media has been becoming threat to relationships or friendship because of likings or dislikings. If the parents prevent the youths to be away from social media, parents are becoming enemies to them. Sometimes, quarrels or clashes take place in the family because one from parents allows youth to use social media. The youths prefer to use social media in spite of restrictions or objections by parents and it creates clashes between them.

6. *Distraction from Study or Aims:*

This is happening due to excessive attention towards social media by the youths. They distract from study and suffer from failures in examinations. They do believe in social media information and do not believe in books. They do not prefer to read books. They believe in social media content or content available on internet. They consequently go away from their aims because they are not able to spend more time on their aim. Social media videos or content may distract them because of its obscene nature.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, the craze of uses of social media has been increasing. The youths prefer to be active on social media by posting or sharing information. They feel that they are updated due to social media. At some points, social media is helpful to youths but at the most of time it has been impacting negatively on their minds. Social media has also both sides that it has positive and negative impacts on youths. But the youths need to be very conscious and careful while using it. They must not think that everything is in their life is social media. There is too much knowledge and information other than sources of social media.

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